8 July 1966

Miss Marjorie McAlinden
California Farmer
Room 402 -2412 W. Seventh St.
Los Angleses, Calif. 90057

Dear Miss McAlinden:

I have been "on vacation" for a few weeks trying to complete a manuscript for a book, hence the delay on this batch of identifications. There is not too much to go on here, but I will give it a try.

1. - Is an easy one because of the flowers. It is our beautiful native wooly blue-curls, Trichostema lanatum Benth. It is native in chaparall in the Coast Ranges near the coast from Onterey and San Benzito counties south to Orange and San Diego counties. I should think it could be successfully transplanted. I don't know whether slips from it would take or not.

2. - From the leaf and the mention of medicinal qualities must be absinthe, Artemesia absinthum, and Old World plant often grown in this country and sometimes escaping farther east. We do not have it recorded as naturalized in California. This plant is also called the common wormwood. A green liquor made from its oils, anise, and other aromatics is illegal in this country. Continued use of it is said to cause nervous derangement.

3 - has me stumped. It looks somewhat like a seedling of the avocado, Persea americana, but the dark color of the twig is wrong, as is the venation of the leaf. Furthermore, I can't imagine avocado volunteering, particularly as far north as the Bay Area. However, it still looks like a member of the Lauraceae, laurel family. Are there any exotic trees cultivated near the garden? This does seem to be a seedling from a tree. I really must have more material, preferably flowers or fruits or more information about possible exotics in the area that could have been the source of seeds.

4 - Is surely a leaf of the common mullein, Verbascum thapsus L. of Eurasia. It is a common weed in waste places, especially along river bottoms and in the pine belt of the Sierra Nevada. It is not common in southern California.

If I find out more on no. 3, I'll let you know post haste. It has me intrigued.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Thorne